

Getting Involved at My Caisse is a Real Possibility!

Desjardins Group's distinguishing quality has always been its democratic nature, whereby each caisse member is also a potential decision-maker. Over the decades we have maintained the principle of "one member, one vote," while constantly increasing and better adapting the means of expression available to each of our 5.8 million members. There is certainly one that's just right for you!

In everyday life, people have little opportunity to influence the economic decisions that concern them. Desjardins Group is the only financial institution in Québec that exercises participatory democracy, and therefore represents one of the few means by which its members can have a say in their own economic affairs. To be a member of a Desjardins caisse is to have the power and possibility to make decisions about issues of importance to you. The more participation there is within various decision-making bodies at Desjardins, the more diverse a range of opinions is heard, and the better democracy will work!

Once again, individual commitment is the cornerstone of any democratic body. Here are a few options to explore, depending on your interests and availability.

The first gateway: the AGM

To exercise my right to vote, attending my caisse's Annual General Meeting (AGM)¹ is the first active step I can take as a member. At the meeting, I will meet the elected officers of my caisse, find out about the year's activities and orientations, vote to elect the new administrators and determine the payment of member dividends², and voice my opinion on topics of importance to me and my caisse.

At the AGM, each member also has the opportunity to run for the position

of officer to sit on the Board of Directors or the Board of Supervision. As an officer, my role is to see to my caisse's development so it can pursue its goals, which are: to provide all members, regardless of the scope of their needs, with a variety of ways to access quality financial services, concrete financial advantages and considerate, personal service; and to contribute to the cooperative, economic and financial education of members as well as to community and cooperative development.

Local, regional or Group-wide commitment?

Are you interested in being a member of your caisse's Board of Directors? Would you like to get more involved? Desjardins Group's democratic structures also extend to regional and Group-wide levels: at the regional level, with the caisses' Regional General Meeting and the General Meeting of Group Caisses, which elects a council of representatives in each of the 16 regions and the group caisses; and at the Desjardins Group level, with the Assembly of Representatives, the Fédération General Meeting and the Orientation Congress³.

Board of Directors (5 to 15 members)

Responsibilities

- Respecting the mission, values and distinctive nature of the caisse
- Strategic management activities
- Performance management activities
- Supporting and supervising the General Management
- Risk-management activities
- Liaising with members and the community and implementing strategic communications

Frequency of meetings Once per month

Board of Supervision (3 or 5 members)

Responsibilities

- Ethics and Professional Conduct
- Cooperation
 - Exercising democracy
 - Providing information and support on cooperative, economic and financial issues
 - Overseeing community development and intercooperation
 - Ensuring application of cooperative and permanent values in commercial and management practices

Frequency of meetings Three or four times per year



Are you interested in a particular issue?

Whether you are intent on developing and improving opportunities for young people, access for seniors, or educational services on family budget management, these are the kinds of community-related issues that you could bring to the attention of your caisse managers and contribute to as a member. Each caisse can form its own committees to respond to the needs of its members, specific clienteles, and the local community. You can simply join an existing committee, or if need be, suggest creating a new one. That's democracy in action!

A special place for young people

If you are between the ages of 18 and 30 and you enjoy hands-on involvement, you can take your commitment to the next level. Desjardins attaches great importance to education and succession. With the Young Intern Officer program, Desjardins offers you the possibility to experience something new, while building a network of personal and professional contacts within the largest cooperative group in Canada. The Young Intern Officer program is an opportunity to do a practical internship on a caisse Board of Directors or Board of Supervision, serving alongside the elected officers. Simply check the internship availability at your caisse and submit your application⁴.

Consultation—a form of participation open to all

Maybe you don't have enough time to participate in your caisse activities but you'd like your opinions on financial services to be taken into consideration. The caisses and Desjardins Group have introduced various ways to consult their members on issues that affect them. The Internet greatly facilitates individual feedback and makes it possible to establish a direct link between a member and their caisse. It only takes a few minutes of your time and a "click" on www.desjardins.com to connect with your caisse and all the Desjardins Group services. And of course, you can always contact the staff or officers of your caisse directly, since proximity to our members remains.

What about your skill level?

Contrary to what you might think, you don't need to have special accounting or financial skills to join a committee or to become an officer at Desjardins. Knowing your community, having a sense of priorities and a love for challenges, learning, commitment and teamwork are all qualities that will enable you to achieve great things at Desjardins! **D**

1. The caisse AGMs usually take place in March and April. Dates are announced ahead of time in the local press.

2. In Québec only, as applicable.

3. For more details on the Desjardins Group's democratic bodies, visit www.desjardins.com under "About Desjardins."

4. Apply online at www.desjardins.com.